

241 wet season throughout the Northern Territory. On the Mount Lamington
 (132) foothills, the dry season is comparatively short and somewhat undependable, but
 it is usually over by the beginning of September. Here cultivators must be sure to
 have enough dry weather for a successful burn prior to planting. 'A significant
 proportion of the mineral energy upon which swidden cultivators draw for their
 growth comes from the ash remains of the fired forest, so that the completeness
 with which a plot is burnt is a crucial factor in determining its yield, a fact of
 which probably all swidden cultivators are aware.' (Geertz 1966: 22-3)
 Furthermore, it is unwise to leave the burn until too late in the dry season, for if
 the soil has dried out (which it does quickly in the tropics), taro plants develop
 few shoots, so that the gardener may be short of shoots for planting out. Hence,
 I was told, a very substantial amount of clearing and planting needs to be done
 between June and August. There is thus a flush of produce nine or ten months
 later, i.e. from April to June. The same rhythm also applies in drier areas, nearer
 the coast, such as Inonda, because there the danger of the soil drying out is even
 greater and the dry season much longer. When we find that the principal
 Orokaiva feasting season is from April to June, we can see that this is
 ecologically determined, as it is then that taro is most plentiful.⁵

243 While most subsidiary crops are grown in the taro garden, it is a fixed rule
 476 that taro and yam should never be grown together. While taro is usually grown
 by individual households, yams are planted and harvested by co-operative
 groups, around the same time as the main taro planting and harvest, but yams
 are usually stored for several months until the next dry season. Yam houses are
 built in yam gardens and used for the storage of no other crop.

245 *Arboriculture.* Although the Orokaiva traditionally planted coconut, betel-
 nut and a few other trees in gardens, villages and in the bush, their arboriculture
 249 used to be rudimentary in comparison to their precise and detailed attention to
 177 tubers, especially taro. The Australian authorities had hardly established
 473 themselves in Papua before they began to press the population into extensive
 arboriculture that would yield a cash income. One of the early 'native
 regulations' (No. 121, passed in 1903), compelled all Papuan villages to grow a
 stipulated number of rubber trees. Three such rubber stands were established at
 Sivepe, ranging from one half to three acres in area, all village men supposedly
 sharing in the work. Rimoldi (1966: 86-93), who describes in detail the
 vicissitudes of exploitation of these trees, shows how ill-adapted communal
 rubber stands are to a society lacking institutions for the distribution of
 corporate assets to its members. Nonetheless, a further stand was established,
 this time quite voluntarily, in 1964. They are known as the 'company trees',
 have not yielded any cash, and will be discussed in detail below as the land
 transactions involved cast light on the ideology of contemporary Orokaiva
 co-operative movements.

245 'Communal' village plantations for coffee were established in the Northern
 473 District under the same regulations as applied to rubber, but all producing trees
 in the villages I visited had been grown on quasi-individual holdings. First
 plantings were around 1955. On a rough estimate I would say that the number
 of trees in Sivepe and Hohorita, two villages on the foothills, were 3,500 and
 15,000, while Inonda, on alluvial plains, had 800. Coffee is one crop that

The Setting

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actually has provided the Orokaiva with a reliable and substantial cash income for some years. This is true to a very minor extent for the third cash crop promoted on a major scale, copra, which was grown especially near the coast. The coffee is processed and sent to a co-operative factory as parchment, for which purpose many villages own one or more hullers. Copra is supposed to be dried in driers built in the villages, but the one I saw in Inonda had broken down and seems unlikely to be repaired.

Clothing. The traditional Orokaiva costume was a skirt for women and a perineal band for men (Williams 1930: 32-4). Boys went naked until some time before puberty, girls until after puberty seclusion. These garments were made of barkcloth obtained from trees which were mostly grown in gardens for this purpose. Larger garments were used for wrapping round the shoulders in cold weather, and also for shrouds. This mode of dress was abandoned in the 1950s, so that today the Orokaiva buy their clothes almost entirely from trade stores and at mission bazaars. Traditional dress is used for dances, initiation ceremonies and other special occasions. For this reason bark-cloth trees (such as the *ajimo*) are found rather infrequently in gardens today. Bark-cloth is still being painted with decorations in traditional style and with a mixture of traditional and trade dyes.

Housing. Villages are in flat clearings where the grass is kept scrupulously cut and from which the women regularly sweep away rubbish. Houses (*bande*) are built in two facing rows, each house normally being occupied by one nuclear family. The roof of sago thatch slopes down from a central ridgepole. Wall construction has been in various styles since Australian contact, but today vertically set sago-branch midribs are becoming old fashioned in some areas and vertically laid shingles, about 6 ft. by 5 1/4 ins., are being adopted in villages desiring to show they are tuned in to modern life. A great number of tree species must be used for the various parts of the house. Materials are taken as much as possible from reverted gardens which contain small trees. For a number of purposes large trees with trunks of high-quality slow-growing wood are considered essential. These trees have to be obtained from areas of bush much older than the usual reverted gardens. On the Mount Lammington foothills, such areas are very scarce. Trees of this quality tend to be the subject of gift exchange as between families, a subject to be discussed below.

Though it is each man's responsibility to build his own house, it is usual to call on helpers, especially sons, brothers and brothers-in-law, to help with construction. Recent changes in house construction include the increasing use of nails, though not for flooring; a remarkable increase in house sizes; the change in wall construction already mentioned, and a number of measures to 'improve' hygiene: lavatories, rubbish holes, pens for chickens, windows. The windows, an innovation promoted by the government to combat tuberculosis, are considered too uncomfortable in cold, wind or rain. Accordingly, they are always covered over with pieces of timber which can be removed if the patrol officer insists.

Bachelors' houses (*oro*) are of precisely the same size and construction as the ordinary *bande*. The more prominent men of the village build themselves small meeting platforms, covered with a roof but lacking walls, for the entertainment of visitors (*anara*). In the gardens, we find small houses with an earth floor, no walls, but a platform just below roof level. People sit in these garden houses

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274 The Department of Agriculture thereupon took over the factory and began operations. The Orokaiva raised strong objections, (1) and a public meeting of about 1,200 people was held on 6th October 1959. Government officers are said to have informed the meeting that the factory was being run at a loss which was being borne by the government. Nevertheless, negotiations were then held with the council and it was agreed that in future the processing and marketing would be run by a committee to be known as the Higaturu Council Coffee Factory Committee which was to consist of the District Agricultural Officer, the Assistant District Officer (Local Government), a representative of the Higaturu council and a representative of the growers (who was not necessarily a member of the council). The committee held its first meeting on 25th February 1960 and met at monthly intervals thereafter. The day to day operation of the factory was controlled by the Department of Agriculture.

473 Early in 1962 it was decided that a new body to be known as the Orokaiva Coffee Growers Society would be set up to handle the processing and marketing of coffee. The society serves a wider area than the council and is independent of the council. It is run by a board of directors with an officer of the Department of Agriculture as adviser, and replaces the former Higaturu Council Coffee Factory Committee. The society is raising capital by selling shares at £5 each to indigenous coffee growers and by the end of 1962 it had a membership of 470 and a share capital of £2,350.(2) It is intended that the society should buy out the council's investment in the coffee factory. Six coffee buying centres have been set up by the society, and all coffee in the area (35 to 40 tons in parchment per year) is now bought through them and processed at the factory. The processed coffee is marketed in Australia through the Territory Department

(1) These were undoubtedly aggravated by a drop in overseas prices soon after the Department took over, and by the fact that the Department several times ran out of funds for buying the coffee and had to send growers home without payment.

(2) Late in 1962 a European planter applied to join the society but his application was disallowed on the ground that the legislation under which the society operates (the Native Economic Development Ordinance 1951-2) does not permit of non-indigenous participation.